

For immediate release  
12/4/2023

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## PRESS STATEMENT

# Western Ranchers and Communities Welcome EPA's Methane Rule

*The release of EPA's Final methane rule will combat harmful pollution and protect communities.*

BILLINGS, Mont: Today, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the release of its finalized [Supplemental Proposal to Reduce Pollution from the Oil and Natural Gas Industry to Fight the Climate Crisis and Protect Public Health](#). The new rule is a significant step towards reducing climate harming pollution from the oil and gas industry. The rule, which applies to all wells across the country, aims to cut methane pollution and mitigate the impacts of climate change while safeguarding public health. For years, Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC) has seen frontline communities throughout the West severely impacted by the unrestricted release of air pollutants like methane and other Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) from oil and gas wells, which threaten the health and livelihoods of communities.

Methane, once released into the atmosphere, has 80 times the warming potential of CO<sub>2</sub> over a 20 year period. In the US, the oil and gas industry is the most significant source of methane emissions outside of livestock production. The EPA's rule will require regular monitoring at all well sites, ensuring that methane emissions are effectively controlled. The rule also restricts routine venting and flaring of methane on new sources, a key contributor of air pollution impacting communities within WORC's region.

Cutting methane pollution from the oil and gas industry is recognized as the quickest and most cost-effective way to slow the rate of climate change and protect public health. The EPA's rule is estimated to cut 58 million tons of methane between its [expected/proposed] 2024 date and 2038—equivalent to taking 5 billion cars off the road. The rule will also cut the release of VOCs by 16 million tons and remove 590,000 tons of other hazardous chemicals from the air. Reducing these emissions will ensure a healthier future for communities across the nation.

“For over a decade, WORC has been working hard to establish a nationwide set of minimum requirements for oil and gas operators to protect the environment from methane emissions,” **said Dr. Barbara Vasquez, Western Organization of Resource Councils' Oil and Gas Chair.** “Today, we finally saw this come to fruition with the release of EPA's final Methane Rule which will help improve the health of our western communities and reduce the warming of our planet. We look forward to working with EPA, and specifically Region 8, to guarantee swift and proper

implementation and enforcement to hold oil and gas operators accountable so that our communities can be better protected from unfettered emissions production.”

“WORC has been advocating for eliminating routine venting and flaring and we are thrilled to see EPA finally address it,” **said Dr. Vasquez.** “This harmful emission practice has contaminated our communities, harmed our health, and placed undue stress on wildlife and our communities. We are pleased to see EPA take significant steps to eliminate this detrimental practice from new sources. We look forward to future improvements that further reduce emissions from existing sources.”

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*[The Western Organization of Resource Councils \(WORC\)](#) is a network of nine grassroots organizations in seven Western states with 19,935 members, many of them ranchers and farmers committed to common-sense reform in agriculture, oil and gas development, coal mine reclamation, and rural economic development. Headquartered in Billings, Mont., WORC also has an office in Washington, D.C.*